UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/422,593	10/21/1999	LEONARD CORNING LAHEY	B09-99-028	5731

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EXAMINER
BOYCE, ANDRE D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2163	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

PTO-90C (Rev. 07-01)

	Application No.	Applicant(s)
Office Action Summary	09/422,593	LAHEY ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Andre Boyce	2163

-- Th MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondenc addr ss --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE _3_ MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _21 October 1999_ .

2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL.**   2b) ☒ This action is non-final.

3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) ☒ Claim(s) _1-39_ is/are pending in the application.

    4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) ☒ Claim(s) _1-39_ is/are rejected.

7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on _21 October 1999_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.

    Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.

    If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

    a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:

        1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

        2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____ .

        3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

    * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

    a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)

2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)

3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _5_ .

4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ .

5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)

6) ☐ Other: .

DETAILED ACTION

1.   Claims 1-39 have been examined.

Information Disclosure Statement

2.   The article entitled " The Seybold Editors' Hot Picks for Seybold San

Francisco Publishing 98", supplied by the applicant, was not disclosed in form

PTO-1449. The examiner disclosed the reference in the PTO-892,

accompanying this office action.

Drawings

3.   The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5)

because they include the following reference sign(s) not mentioned in the

description: "58" in Figure 3, "222", "224", and "228" in Figure 5b, and "450",

"452", and "456" in Figure 11.

4.   The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5)

because they do not include the following reference sign(s) mentioned in the

description: "error worker 380" on page 21, line 26; "supervisor 308", "job status

table 304", and "job status table 308" mentioned several times throughout the specification.

5.   The drawings are objected to because "network 12", "printer 14", and "fax 16" are interchanged throughout the specification (i.e. "printer 12" on page 5, line 27).

6.   A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

7.   The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because it is longer than 150 words. Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).

Claim Objections

8.   Claim 1 is objected to because of the following informalities: "system" should be -- method --, in line 1. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

9.   The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

10.   Claims 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 16, 20, 22, 23, 24, 29, 33, 35, 36, and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 3, 16, and 29 recite the limitation "the second database". There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claims 7, 20, and 33 recite the limitation "the output state". There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claims 9, 22, and 35 are vague and unclear due to the sentence structure. The examiner suggests replacing "worker completing processing" with -- worker completely processing --, and "the job setting the completion" with -- the job, and setting the completion --. Prior art will be applied to the claims on this basis.

Claims 10, 23, and 36 recite the limitation "the job entry" in the second, second, and forth lines, respectively of each claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claims 11, 24, and 37 recite the limitation "the supervisor". There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

11.   The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35

U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this

Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless – (b) the invention was patented or described in a printed

publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to

the date of application for patent in the United States.

12.   Claims 1, 5-11, 13, 14, 18-24, 26, 27, 31-37, and 39 are rejected under 35

U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hsu et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,581,691.

As per claim 1, Hsu et al disclose a workflow management system (see

column 4, line 18) for creating and delivering output material (newspaper, see

column 1, lines 52-53), comprising generating a customer record to include fields

specifying at least one product, customer preferences, and a selected output

method to deliver generated output material on the product specified in the

customer record (see column 7, line 42, the customer inherently indicates the

presence of a customer record and preferences), adding a job record including a

status field to a job status table for the customer record (history database 116,

see column 4, lines 39-41), setting the job record to a first status, processing a

selected job (done by the flow controller 130, see column 5, lines 9-15, the

creation of a new instance is equivalent to setting the record to a first status and

processing the job), invoking a first worker (resource, see column 15, lines 52-

54) if the selected job has a first status, generating output material from processing the product and customer preference fields with the first worker, setting the status for the selected job to a second status after generating the output material with the first worker, invoking a second worker if the selected job has the second status, determining a selected one of a plurality of delivery options from the customer record for the selected job, and transmitting the output material via the determined delivery option to the customer to the customer. The Hsu et al system workflow description database 114 is used to specify business process schemas (see column 6, lines 20-26), which inherently would include the output and delivery methods as generated by the first and second workers (resources, see column 15, lines 52-54).

As per claim 5, Hsu et al disclose determining whether an error occurred while processing the job (exception, see column 7, lines 8-11), invoking an error worker if the job has the error status (compensation routine, see column 7, lines 8-11), performing error recovery with the error worker, and setting the status of the job to the first or second status after recovery (see column 7, lines 12-20).

As per claim 6, Hsu et al disclose a supervisor program (flow controller 130, see column 5, lines 9-15) that polls the job status table, performs the steps of invoking the first and second workers, and processes every record in the job status table when performing the polling operation.

As per claim 7, Hsu et al disclose a worker transition table including a plurality of records, each indicating an input worker, a completion state, an output

worker and output status (work flow description table, see column 6, lines 10-13),

wherein the input worker indicates the worker assigned to process the job, the

completion state is a status indicated for the job after the input worker processes

the job, the output worker is the worker that processes the job after the input

worker and resulting in the completion state, and the output state is the state to

which the job status is set (see Figure 4, step 152), and wherein the job status

table further indicates a current worker assigned to process the job, wherein

setting the status comprises determining from the worker transition table one

record having an input worker and completion state matching the current worker

and job status, respectively, and setting the status to the output state and the

current worker to the output worker (history database 116, see column 4, lines

39-41).

As per claim 8, Hsu et al disclose invoking the output worker after setting

the job status to the output status (flow controller 130, see column 6, lines

31-37).

As per claim 9, Hsu et al disclose the worker completely processing the

job, and setting the completion status to a state indicating an outcome of

processing the job (see column 16, lines 43-46).

As per claim 10, Hsu et al disclose setting the status to a third status after

adding the job entry in the job status table, invoking a data conditioning worker

(another resource, see column 15, lines 50-54) if the status for the job is the third

status (flow controller 130 sets the status, see column 6, lines 31-37), processing

the customer record to determine whether at least one value satisfies at least one condition, taking corrective actions if the data in the customer record does not satisfy each condition, and setting the status of the job to the first status if the data in the customer record satisfies each condition. Processing the customer record, determining conditions, and setting the status is all done by the flow controller 130, and the workflow description database in the Hsu et al method will inherently specify the conditions via the business process schemas (see column 6, lines 22-25).

As per claim 11, Hsu et al disclose an imposition worker and table of contents worker, wherein the supervisor (flow controller 130, see column 6, lines 31-37) sets the job status to an imposition and table of content status, and invokes the imposition and table of contents workers. The imposition and table of content workers are simple more resources (see column 15, lines 52-54), as taught by the Hsu et al, that would be invoked by the flow controller 130.

As per claim 13, Hsu et al disclose multiple workers each associated with one input status and at least one output status, wherein the status of the job is updated to one associated output status after one worker completes processing the job, wherein the output status for one worker is the input status associated with one other worker and wherein the definition of input and output statuses for workers defines the workflow of the job (see column 6, lines 10-17).

Claims (14, 18-24, and 26) and (27, 31-37, and 39) are rejected based

upon the rejections of claims 1, 5-11, and 13, since they are the system and

article of manufacture claims, respectively, corresponding to the method claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

13.   The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for

all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set
forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and
the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the
invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains.
Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

14.   Claims 2-4, 12, 15-17, 25, 28-30, and 38 are rejected under 35 U.S.C.

103(a) as being unpatentable over Hsu et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,581,691 in view

of Milsted et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,345,256.

As per claim 2, Hsu et al do not disclose accessing at least one content

file by processing a database table using values in the customer record

associated with the job, or generating the content of each file into the output

material. Milsted et al disclose the content provider 101 to determine the product

configuration and the work flow manager enabling the operator to place the

products in the queue of the content request process 802 (see column 52, lines

39-47). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the

time the invention was made to include accessing at least one content file using

values in the customer record and generating the content of each file into the

output material, in the Hsu et al method, as seen in the Milsted et al method, thus

allowing the Hsu et al method to more accurately match the customer requests while increasing the database through new content requests.

As per claim 3, Hsu et al do not disclose processing a template including queries of records in the database table, accessing at least one value in a field in one customer record to include in a query against the database table, or applying the query against a second database to determine a record associated with a file including fields matching the query, wherein the accessed file is associated with the determined record, and wherein generating the content into the output material comprises generating the content from the accessed file into the template, which forms the output material. Milsted et al disclose performing queries to the database 160 of the content provider(s) 101 (see column 53, lines 46-61), in order to obtain product information, define the product, and generate the content. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include performing queries of records in the database, accessing at least one value in the customer record, and applying the queries to generate content, in the Hsu et al method, as seen in the Milsted et al method, thus allowing the Hsu et al method to more accurately match the customer requests while increasing the database through new content requests.

As per claim 4, Hsu et al disclose the first status being associated with the first worker and the second status being associated with the second worker. The resource resolution function ID 236 (see column 15, 50-54), points directly to the resource (worker) doing the step. Hsu et al do not disclose the first and second

workers querying the job status table to access all jobs having the associated

status. Milsted et al disclose the work flow manager 154, using application

programming interfaces (APIs) to perform status queries (see column 51, lines

20-24 and 44). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art

at the time the invention was made to allow the first and second workers to query

the status table to access all associated jobs, in the Hsu et al method, as seen in

the Milsted et al method, thus dividing the status querying function between

several resources, thereby improving the efficiency of the method.

As per claim 12, Hsu et al disclose generating information on the output

material (see column 16, lines 49-53), setting the status (flow controller 130 sets

the status, see column 6, lines 31-37) for the job in the job status table to a third

status, and invoking an accounting worker (another resource, see column 15,

lines 50-54) if the job has a third status. Hsu et al do not disclose the accounting

worker processing the generated information on the output material to determine

costs of generating the output material, or generating an invoice. Milsted et al

disclose an account reconciliation tool that contacts the clearinghouse to

compare transactions (see column 81, lines 7-10), which inherently includes

determining a cost and generating an invoice. It would have been obvious to one

having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include an

accounting worker to determine the cost and generate an invoice, in the Hsu et al

method, as seen in the Milsted et al method, thus being able to accurately track

the costs associated with performing the workflow, thereby increasing the profitability of the method.

Claims (15-17 and 25) and (28-30 and 38) are rejected based upon the rejections of claims 2-4 and 12, since they are the system and article of manufacture claims, respectively, corresponding to the method claims.

Conclusion

15.   The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

-Ohmura et al, U.S. Patent No. 6,15,583 disclose a workflow management method including a server and tables for holding processes.

-Turley et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,940,804 disclose a computer system method for managing resources in an automated workflow system for manipulating a work item.

-Barkley, U.S. Patent No. 6,088,679 discloses a workflow sequence specified by process definition.

16.   Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Andre Boyce whose telephone number is (703) 305-1867. The examiner can normally be reached on 8-4:30pm M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (703) 305-9643. The fax

phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is

assigned are (703) 746-7239 for regular communications and (703) 746-7238 for

After Final communications.

   Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application

or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is

(703) 305-3900.

adb
February 23, 2002

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